

REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

Claims 1 and 27-66 are pending. Claims 2-26 were previously canceled. Claims 46-66 are withdrawn from consideration. Independent claim 32, and claims 34, 36, 39, and 43 depending therefrom, are canceled herein. Claims 1 and 27-45 are rejected. Claims 1 and 33 are the pending independent claims. In the Office Action,

1. Claims 1 and 27-37 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Admitted Prior Art ("APA") in paragraphs 0002-0003 of Applicants' Specification.

2. Claims 38-45 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over the APA in view of Willimek et al. (U.S. 3,618,191).

In view of the following arguments, all claims are believed to be in condition for allowance over the prior art of record. Therefore, this response is believed to be a complete response to the Office Action. However, Applicants reserve the right to set forth further arguments supporting the patentability of their claims, including the separate patentability of the dependent claims not explicitly addressed herein, in future papers. Further, for any instances in which the Examiner took Official Notice in the Office Action, Applicants expressly do not acquiesce to the taking of Official Notice, and respectfully request that the Examiner provide an affidavit to support the Official Notice taken in the next Office Action, as required by 37 CFR § 1.104(d)(2).

II. SECTION 102 REJECTIONS

A. Independent Claim 1

Claim 1 recites in part "[a] process of machining inner joint parts of constant velocity universal ball joints . . . comprising, simultaneously machining one ball track and at least one guiding web." Contrary to the Examiner's assertion, the APA does not teach or suggest the foregoing recitation of claim 1.

The APA (Specification, paragraph 3; emphases added) states that:

When producing prior art inner joint parts it is already known to subject the workpieces and a common clamping device first to machining operations on the individual ball tracks and subsequently to machining operations on the guiding webs. When machining the ball tracks, the ball hub is held in position and by means of rotating tools, the ball tracks are machined track by track in a chip-forming way.

More particularly, the already hardest tracks are ground. Thereafter, the ball hub, in a rotatingly driven condition, is finished-turned (on outer diameter) and then form-ground.

Thus, the APA discloses that a machining operation for ball tracks may take place before the machining operation for guiding webs, and that a machining operation for each of the ball tracks is performed one after the other, i.e., track by track. Accordingly, the APA does not in any way teach or suggest simultaneously machining one ball track and at least one guiding web of an inner joint part of a constant velocity universal ball joint, as recited in claim 1. For least this reason, claim 1 is allowable over the APA.

Willimek does not compensate for the deficiencies of the APA. Willimek discloses at most that “two opposite longitudinal grooves in the joint member are lapped simultaneously, each by a lap having the profile of the longitudinal grooves.” (Willimek, column 3, lines 16-19; emphasis added.) Willimek provides no teaching or suggestion of “simultaneously machining one ball track and at least one guiding web.”

Moreover, Applicants’ Specification clearly sets forth advantages of the claimed invention over the APA. For example, machining times may be shortened, and down times of individual tools may be considerably reduced. Accordingly, “investment costs are reduced considerably.” (Specification, paragraph 6.) In addition, quality improvements are achieved by reducing or eliminating transverse forces that “are applied to the clamping device for the workpiece, so that the tracks and guiding webs can be produced with a higher degree of precision.” (Specification, paragraph 7.) Applicants respectfully submit that these advantages provide further reasons why the claimed invention is novel over the cited prior art.

In sum, the rejection of claim 1, and all claims depending therefrom, must be withdrawn.

B. Independent Claim 33

Independent claim 33 recites in part “simultaneously machining at least two guiding webs in the longitudinal direction.” The APA does not in any way teach or suggest simultaneously machining guiding webs. In fact, as can be seen from the foregoing quotation of paragraph 3 of Applicants’ Specification, the APA is entirely silent with respect to an order in which guiding webs are machined. For at least these reasons, claim 33, and all claims depending therefrom, are allowable over the APA.

Willimek does not compensate for the deficiencies of the APA. As noted above, Willimek discloses at most that “two opposite longitudinal grooves in the joint member are lapped simultaneously, each by a lap having the profile of the longitudinal grooves.” (Willimek, column 3, lines 16-19; emphasis added.) Willimek provides no teaching or suggestion of “simultaneously machining at least two guiding webs in the longitudinal direction.”

Further, the advantages noted above concerning claim 1 also apply to claim 33.

In sum, the rejection of claim 33, and all claims depending therefrom, must be withdrawn.

III. SECTION 103 REJECTIONS

Concerning the rejection of dependent claims 38-45 under Section 103, these claims are patentable at least by reason of their dependence from a patentable independent claim, as set forth above. Further, as also noted above, Applicants reserve the right to argue for the separate patentability of these claims in future papers.

IV. CONCLUSION

All rejections have been addressed. In view of the above, the presently pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested and the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue. It is believed that any fees associated with the filing of this paper are identified in an accompanying transmittal. However, if any additional fees are required, they may be charged to Deposit Account 18-0013, under order number Order No. 66967-0036. To the extent necessary, a petition for extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a) is hereby made, the fee for which should be charged against the aforementioned account.

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Respectfully submitted,

Electronic signature: /Charles A. Bieneman/
Charles A. Bieneman

Registration No.: 51,472
RADER, FISHMAN & GRAUER PLLC
Correspondence Customer Number: 84362
Attorney for Applicant